



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0919CA-1 for Fresno Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a comprehensive and coherent vision of reform based on its efforts in the four core educational assurance areas. It describes how the decision to focus on student development of literacy through language development in PreK through /Grade 3 evolved from the district's adoption of Common Core State Standards and reports from two task forces on graduation and early learning. The application clearly describes a theory of change that improving readiness for Kindergarten and proficiency by the end of Grade 3 will lead to the development of strong academic foundations for becoming college- and career-ready. The application also describes its earlier development of a web-based system for access to student, classroom, and school achievement data that will provide actionable information to appropriate audiences in a timely manner.</p> <p>Given the district's commitment to the above theory of change, the district articulates a clear and credible approach to building literacy in PreK-3, which will accelerate student achievement beyond Grade 3. It argues clearly that implementing a blended learning classroom rotation model will enable teachers to deepen student learning through personalize instruction and content for each student. Since many of the participating students represent historically at-risk groups, the district argues that helping all children receive the essential skills and tools during their earliest learning years will increase equity in supporting future academic success.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application adequately describes the process used to select the participating schools. Based on a growing body of evidence that Kindergarten readiness and literacy proficiency by Grade 3 were key requirements preparing students to be college- and career-ready, and significant inputs from administrators, teachers, and parents, it was decided to focus on PreK-3. In order to have the greatest impact and ensure equity of resources for all PreK-3 students, it was decided to serve these grades in all of the district's elementary schools. It would have been more informative if the district had described the manner in which inputs were obtained from administrators, teachers, and parents.</p> <p>A list of the participating schools, providing all requested information about participating students is provided.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>As stated in an earlier comment, the application clearly describes the theory of change that improving readiness for Kindergarten and achieving proficiency in literacy by Grade 3 are key milestones for student college and career success. The application also states that it will use the learnings from the proposed project to scale the model to other subject areas in PreK-3 and other grade levels throughout the district, including growing the classroom rotation model and blended learning into Grades 4-6. The application provides an adequate plan for scaling hp the proposed project strategies to higher grades and other subjects in an appendix. The plan includes all requested elements, but is written at a fairly general level.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a complete set of tables to describe annual goals it considers ambitious and achievable, for PreK-3</p>		

and for the entire district. It provides a very clear explanation of how the different goals were measured or calculated. It provides an explanation of why summative assessment results for math are also included and an explanation of its rationale for including graduation and college enrollment goals for a project that will focus on literacy in PreK-3. It explains how the achievement gap tables are related to the summative assessment tables. This presentation of goals is very clear and complete.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application systematically presents evidence of district improvements in student learning outcomes and achievement gaps. Changes in percentage proficient between 2008 and 2012 are described for different subgroups, grades, and in comparison with state results. However, results for the intervening years are not presented. Although there is evidence that all subgroups and almost all grades have made increases during this period, the evidence of reducing achievement gaps is mixed. The district's graduation rate has increased slightly and college enrollments rose somewhat between 2006 and 2009. Again, the intervening years are missing.</p> <p>The application does an excellent job of relating these student performance results to specific reform strategies implemented in the past few years. In addition, it describes recent reform activities in the district's three persistently lowest-achieving and two low-performing schools and reports significant turnaround successes in all five.</p> <p>Several of the reform strategies described involve facilitating the access of educators and parents to data describing student performance and needs, e.g., leveraging its Equity and Access database to allow its summer school program to target students for participation and provide learning opportunities that address their specific needs, or using its Parent University Program to help parents and families access the ATLAS Parent Portal for information on student attendance, class schedules, class assignments, current grades, units toward graduation, current GPA, and grade history.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application clearly states that actual personnel salaries for all district staff are posted online on the district's public website and that a regional newspaper also maintains a salary database with this information for all district staff making over \$17,000 per year. District-wide non-personnel expenditure data are also available on the district's website and the district is working to determine how it might share these data publicly for each school. Other financial information presented to the Board of Education and publicly available on the district's website is also described.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a thorough description of a number of conditions and legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements that provide ample autonomy and support for the proposed personalized learning environments. Examples of these conditions and requirements are presented in several areas: the state's increased emphasis on early learning, educator excellence, technology, data, Common Core Standards, and the emergence of blended learning models throughout the state. This description provides a very convincing argument that successful conditions and sufficient autonomy create a very favorable context to support the proposed project.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a detailed description of the frequent, close collaboration with the local teachers association to conceptualize and develop the proposed project through a high-level design team and working teams. These teams met for over 65 hours and input was sought from teachers, especially in PreK-3. However, the manner in which teacher input was sought is not described.</p>		

The application also describes how parents, students, teachers, bargaining unit representatives, instructional assistants, district and school administrators, and community stakeholders influenced the development of the project proposal through their participation in the Early Learning and the Graduation Task Forces formed by the district.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the district and the teachers association and letters of support from more than 20 stakeholders are attached.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application presents a general plan for implementing personalized learning environments that identifies goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties. It also clearly describes the logical flow from identified needs of students, through the decision to target early literacy, to a description of the proposed strategies, and to the plan it will use to implement.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a very extensive response to this criterion, addressing each and every sub-criteria. It bases its approach to learning on a teaching pyramid framework consisting of 12 building blocks and on leveraging a number of current and expanded district initiatives in order to establish personalized learning environments and align PreK and K-3 standards and practices. Each building block in the progression through the four levels of the teaching pyramid is discussed thoroughly, from the building of positive relationships to the provision of interventions consistent with an RtI system.</p> <p>The application explains how teachers and parents and supporting strategies (e.g., the classroom rotational model) will help students understand the importance of their learning, understand how to set and reach their learning goals, engage in deep learning experiences through access and exposure to diversity, and master critical academic content and skills. Similarly, the application explains how teachers, parents, and other supports (e.g., the ATLAS data platform) will ensure access to a personalized sequence of instructional content, a variety of instructional approaches, high quality content, regular feedback, appropriate strategies for high-need students.</p> <p>The application also indicates that PreK-3 students and their parents/families will be provided orientation and training sessions to help them understand how the classroom rotational model will work.</p> <p>Finally, the application contains a plan (with all of the required elements) for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment that covers goals and activities described in this section on learning and the following section on teaching and leading.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes how the district will build teacher and administrator support for the proposed project, conduct initial and ongoing professional learning and support for teachers, and align this training with the district's Early Learning Department's professional learning goals. In support of the implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies, all participating teachers and principals will receive at least 40 hours of professional learning prior to the 2013-2014 school year. The application also describes a system of ongoing professional learning, support and community building for teachers to refine their abilities and share best practices.</p> <p>To help educators adapt content and instruction, the initial teacher training will help them customize instruction and learning content to meet student needs and interests. This training and ongoing support will also help teachers identify student academic needs, interests, and optimal learning modalities through existing district assessments, curricula, and data systems (e.g., ATLAS). To help educators measure student progress, the district will provide professional learning on methods of collecting and interpreting student assessment data. Using an existing community of practice framework, teachers will share experiences, creating an environment of support and continuous improvement.</p> <p>The application also clearly describes the district's current approaches to teacher and principal evaluation, how data for each are or will be collected and analyzed, and how feedback and support are provided. The district is currently collaborating with</p>		

the teachers association on the design of a progressive teacher evaluation system that is based on recommendations made by the state's Educator Excellence Task Force. It is currently using its existing principal evaluation system.

The application describes in detail how participating educators are assured access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources, including actionable information, learning resources, and procedures for matching specific resources to student needs. It also describes the training, policies, data, tools, and resources available to school leadership that enables it to structure an effective learning environment, including anticipated information from the developing teacher evaluation system and practices in support of continuous improvement in improving student achievement levels and closing achievement gaps.

The application reiterates the district's commitment to a teacher evaluation system that will support teacher growth and improvement and increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers within the district. The district's current principal evaluation system also emphasizes formative evaluation through setting goals, identifying strategies, and identifying outcome targets. While the application contains a narrative description of the district's plan for this commitment, there does not appear to be a detailed plan that identifies goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties for this particular sub-criterion.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes a hierarchical organizational structure for the proposed project with inter-level membership that is designed to provide "agile" structures that will ensure strong support for personalized learning implementation and continuous improvement within the project. The structure contains a district oversight team, a district leadership team, a joint professional learning council, regional teams, and school literacy and professional learning councils. The application describes the membership and responsibilities of each team/council.</p> <p>The application does not appear to describe how the school literacy and professional learning councils will have the flexibility and autonomy over the factors mentioned in this sub-criterion. Instead it describes their responsibility for implementing the teaching pyramid and blended learning model at the school level, communicating feedback to the regional teams, and engaging parents in school-level decision making.</p> <p>The application describes how the project will give students the opportunity to progress based on demonstrated mastery at multiple times and in multiple ways. It also describes how the teaching pyramid framework supports instructional practices with greater adaptability and customization of content on a student-by-student basis.</p> <p>The application provides a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that contains the essential elements of a high-quality plan.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	9
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides detailed descriptions of how the district infrastructure and proposed elements of the project will support each of these four sub-criteria. Access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources will be supported by educators having extensive opportunities for professional development, classrooms fully equipped with the necessary hardware and software for project implementation, access for students and families to computers at local libraries and community centers, and the ATLAS parent portal. Appropriate levels of technical support will include augmenting the IT staff at the district and school level, providing training for school level IT staff, and access to the blended learning software vendor's online troubleshooting support and documentation. The district is already using technology systems that allow transfer of information in an open data format, will ensure that all new data collected will be accessible through ATLAS, and will require the blended learning software vendor to enable its data to be exported in an open data format.. Finally, all district data is currently housed in an interoperable data system (ATLAS). New content and assessments implemented by the project will be fully integrated with existing data systems.</p> <p>The application provides a plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that contains the essential elements of a high-quality plan.</p>		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	13
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes plans for implementing a comprehensive, well-organized continuous improvement process that will provide timely and regular feedback on the progress of the proposed project. It clearly describes procedures that will be used on a daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. This description includes what activities will be monitored and by whom. It includes a general description of the different outcome and implementation measures that will be used and the different data collection methods (details are provided in E(3)). It also explains the role of each level in the project's hierarchy of teams in carrying out these continuous improvement procedures.</p> <p>The application also indicates that the development of continuous improvement systems for the proposed project will be done in cooperation with other regional and statewide continuous improvement systems, such as the state's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. Finally, there is a description of how each type of team will share the information it is responsible for collecting with higher-level teams, and there is some description of how this information will be shared publicly in one of the activities in a plan for continuous improvement presented in Appendix 5.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes a strong commitment to reaching out to internal and external stakeholders in order to obtain information about the quality of outcomes and implementation, and provides some evidence that the district already has some systems in place to accomplish this. The best evidence of which stakeholders will be engaged in this process and how is found in a detailed plan presented in Appendix 5 for continuous improvement, including goals, activities, timeline, deliverables, and responsible parties.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides tables describing an appropriate number of performance measures and ambitious, but achievable, annual targets for each measure. However, targets are not provided for subgroups with the exception of proficiency on ELA state assessments in Grade 3. For each applicant-proposed measure, the table contains a brief description of the rationale for the measure, how it will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information, and how the district will review and improve the measure over time. The application could have provided additional details for each applicant-proposed measure by placing it in narrative outside of the table. The application also provided descriptions of applicant-proposed measures of certain aspects of project implementation to be collected from educators, parents, and students.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a brief description of two strategies it will use to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed project investments. (Elsewhere in the application, specific methods to collect evaluative information are described, such as obtaining feedback on professional development, and the usefulness of data sources.) It describes an annual review of the project plan conducted by the oversight team which would seek feedback from teachers, coaches, and leaders regarding which activities seemed to be having the greatest impact and where additional resources would be the most helpful. The application also describes an intent to use the results of this evaluation to create and fund new initiatives to increase the impact of the proposed project, such as expanding the blended learning and classroom rotation model to other subjects and grades. Finally, the application includes two goals in its plan for continuous improvement presented in Appendix 5 that address this overall evaluation criterion.</p>		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
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(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application presents a budget based on two projects: Personalized Learning Implementation and Professional Development. No additional funds beyond the proposed Race to the Top - District grant are identified in this budget. The budget appears to be reasonable and sufficient to support the proposed work. The project detail tables and narrative contain a description of all of the funds requested for each of the two projects and clearly identify the funds that will be used for one-time investments and for ongoing operational costs.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application contains a thoughtful description of how the proposed project can be sustained for three additional years. The assumptions made are clearly laid out: (a) the district and partner commitment to the further development of a robust early learning system; (b) the ability of the district to provide part of the financial support and the pledges from several foundations for ongoing support; and (c) estimates of ongoing costs in the years after the grant ends. The applications presents an estimated budget for these ongoing costs and the planned sources of funds to cover these costs, A plan for sustaining the project for three years, which includes goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties is included in Appendix 5. This description of sustainability does not appear to include any references to support from state and local government leaders.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes a partnership with one of the 58 county-based First 5 Commissions to support the district's plan to improve PreK-3 literacy through language development. The viability of this partnership is supported by past and current contributions made by First 5 in the form of Early Learning grants and support for the district's Kinder Camp and Transitional Kindergarten. Its most recent strategic plan places a priority on attaining quality preschool programs in the district.</p> <p>The application identifies four performance measures that align with the district's proposal. These include a Kindergarten Readiness measure, Grade 3 performance on the state assessments, attendance, and suspensions. The application applies these measures only to all participating students. However, since all PreK-3 students in the district will be participants, these measures appear to be "population-level."</p> <p>The application describes how the partnership will track these measures, use the resulting data to target resources, and factor these results into the district's continuous improvement process. The current contract with First 5 is cited to explain how the partnership will integrate services by its focus on developing a district-wide PreK-3 alignment of programs.</p> <p>The application also provides a comprehensive summary of how the partnership will build staff capacity, particularly at the PreK level, to assess the needs of participating students, schools, and the community through professional development for PreK teachers and using data from the First 5 database and the district's ATLAS database. The description of how the partnership will build capacity to engage parents and families is especially impressive. Through support from First 5, the district will work with the Parent University to create a parent education team to educate parents of early learners, form an early learning parent advisory council, and engage parents in data-sharing. The application also explains how this partnership contributes to helping staff assess the progress of the proposed plan through an evaluator contracted by First 5 and the responsibility of district staff to monitor programs funded by First 5.</p> <p>Finally, the application describes its annual goals based on the four selected performance measures (described above) using the targets presented earlier in the application.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not	Met

	Met	
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides a detailed, comprehensive, and coherent description of how it builds on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments designed to improve learning and teaching. It presents a cogent argument for the district's decision to focus on early learning evolving from the district's adoption of Common Core State Standards and reports from two task forces on graduation and early learning. The application also states that it will use the learnings from the proposed project to scale the model to other subject areas in PreK-3 and other grade levels throughout the district, including growing the classroom rotation model and blended learning into Grades 4-6.</p> <p>The application systematically presents evidence of district improvements in student learning outcomes and achievement gaps between 2008 and 2012 for different subgroups, grades, and in comparison with state results. This evidence, combined with (a) the state's increased emphasis on early learning, educator excellence, technology, data, Common Core Standards, and the emergence of blended learning models throughout the state, and b) the frequent, close collaboration with the local teachers association to conceptualize and develop the proposed project, augurs well for a successful implementation.</p> <p>The application describes an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner. It bases its approach to learning on a teaching pyramid framework and on leveraging a number of current and expanded district initiatives in order to establish personalized learning environments and align PreK and K-3 standards and practices.</p> <p>The application describes how the district will build teacher and administrator support for the proposed project, conduct initial and ongoing professional learning and support for teachers, and align this training with the district's Early Learning Department's professional learning goals. The application also clearly describes the district's current approaches to teacher and principal evaluation, how data for each are or will be collected and analyzed, and how feedback and support are provided.</p> <p>The application describes a hierarchical organizational structure for the proposed project designed to ensure strong support for personalized learning implementation and continuous improvement within the project. It provides a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure. And it describes a comprehensive, well-organized continuous improvement process that will provide timely and regular feedback on the progress of the proposed project.</p>		

Total	210	180
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### Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13

#### Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The application describes an optional budget supplement for a resource that is very necessary in the move toward Common Core State Standards and the new aligned assessments being developed for states by two assessment consortia. It is to create an online CCSS Teacher Capacity Launchpad portal that will provide CCSS professional learning content that teachers need and in ways that teachers find engaging and useful. This effort will involve staff from the eight school districts participating in the California Office to Reform Education (CORE) consortium.

The application describes a strong rationale for this project. As the CORE districts move toward CCSS implementation, they will face significant challenges with limited resources. The application argues successfully that the creation of this portal will address these challenges. Building on two sets of resources already developed, content for new instructional strategies and curriculum resources will be added. The portal will use the latest interactive technology, facilitating a dynamic exchange of ideas and resources across a large number of educators. (The eight districts in the consortia represent over 45,000 educators and a million students.) The application points out that, once developed, the portal will be opened to all educators in the U.S.

The proposed plan for developing this portal is coherent and credible. It describes the content that will be developed, a schedule for that development, and goals for each year. It describes the organizational and governance structure for the proposed work, including the roles and responsibilities of staff and the 24 development teams.

The proposed budget appears reasonable and adequate to support the implementation of this project. The budget narrative provides a detailed description of costs, including costs for sustaining the portal beyond the grant period.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	10
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes an optional budget supplement to leverage current structures and systems for collaboration and knowledge sharing to allow the eight districts in the CORE consortium to meet the common challenges in implementing personalized learning plans by sharing lessons learned and successful practices with each other. This CORE District Collaboration Plan would build infrastructure for regular knowledge sharing among CORE districts and extend personalized learning within the CORE district as well as to other districts throughout the country.</p> <p>The application provides a straightforward, if not compelling, rationale for this project. While personalized learning or differentiated teaching is not new, bringing it to scale in an efficient and effective way is. Three of the eight CORE districts are apparently applying for Race to the Top - District grants, representing similar approaches in different subjects and grade levels. They will, however, face similar hurdles. The CORE District Collaboration Plan would (a) identify funding sources and resources, (b) create effective implementation strategies, and (c) document evidence for stakeholders and funders that supports innovative solutions. One significant challenge to this rationale is its apparent dependence on several CORE districts receiving funding to support the development of personalized learning environments.</p> <p>The plan for this project describes the activities that would be used to collaborate and share: in-person meetings, webinars, the creation of content to be shared, and a database to store the content and facilitate sharing. It describes the organizational and governance structure for the proposed work, including the roles and responsibilities of staff, district leadership teams, and the school-level teams that would research, write, and share case studies of evidence of the successes experienced within these districts..</p> <p>The proposed budget appears reasonable and adequate to support the implementation of this project. The budget narrative provides a detailed description of costs, including costs for sustaining the portal beyond the grant period.</p>		



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0919CA-2 for Fresno Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has evidence of utilizing a strong research base throughout its vision. Reference to the research studies used are made throughout the narrative, footnotes and included in the appendix.</p> <p>The applicant created 4 complementing beliefs to the already existing Board of Education goals; it appears these will guide the applicants' reform vision towards personalized learning for the intended students however the applicant does not address specifics on accelerating student achievement other than citations of research articles.</p> <p>The applicant mentions two already developed two task forces listed below; as these task forces have an important role in reform, the task forces are already in place and no new information is provided to support a new reform vision to support this grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FUSD Graduation Task Force: targets increasing number of students who stay in school and are on target to graduate</li> <li>FUSD Task Force on Early Learning: develop approach for accelerating academic achievement and social/emotional growth</li> </ul> <p>The applicant addresses Core Assurance Area 2: The applicant has already established partnership with Microsoft to develop a data system aligned with district and state. The narrative explains the type of data that will be available through this system;</p>		



it appears to be current data and timely. Evidence of this data system is provided in appendix; it appears to be comprehensive and user-friendly. This program appears to be aligned with the vision reform.

The applicant addresses Core Assurance Area 3: The applicant explains the creation of a Math/science residency program at California State University to begin in 2013, Teacher Development Department established in 2009, involvement in an Educator Excellence Task Force, four year participation in Special Education Sumer cohort, Lab School started in 2012, Administrative Leadership Preparation Program beginning in 2006, a new talent management system , Foundations for Learning Agreement, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, etc. While these approaches are comprehensive and coherent and align with the vision, the approaches appear to be already in place. The applicant therefore does not include any approaches to support the reform.

The applicant addresses Core Assurance Area 4: The beginning of the narrative mentions a specific low-achieving school which has been turned around. It is unclear if the applicant proposes to replicate this reform in its vision. The applicant provides no new approaches while addressing turning around low-achieving schools.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

5

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant selected all schools to participate; the focus is on literacy and therefore only data for literacy was provided.

The applicant provides list of schools and total number of participating in table provided.

The process is not described in the narrative beyond the following:

- input from administrators, teachers and parents; no details provided as to the nature of the input
- the applicants' desire to select all schools as this implementation will serve as a challenge.
- previous initiatives (research references are provided in the appendix and footnotes); it is unclear if these previous experiences are to be replicated in the current reform; one source or success is not sufficient evidence to determine if this approach will attain the reform goals.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides support for its plan in the chart provided in appendix 5. The applicant provides elaborate explanations of the activities proposed to meet each goal listed on the chart. The chart details on its proposed activities that include ongoing Professional Development, introducing the model to other subject areas, building on course offerings and refining goals. The applicant does not address how these activities will reach its outcome goal and student learning outcomes for all students. While the goal for each activity is listed it does not provided a "big picture" of how these smaller goals will meet the larger goal of reform for this grant.

The applicant mentions implementing this model annually are third grade students move it the upper grades through middle school. While this appears to be a comprehensive approach within the participating schools, the applicant does not address how this supports district-wide change beyond the participating schools such as the feeder pattern middle schools, high schools, graduation rates and college entrance.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes their plan to translate data from California Standards Test to Smarter Balanced Assessment which the applicant states will be implemented in 2014. There are no details of what the expected correlation of the two assessments will be.

There is some confusion in the narrative in regards to the lowest achieving subgroup between African American and English Language Learners. The applicant mentions African American subgroup 26% proficiency with a goal of increasing to 56% however the applicant proceeds to mention the achievement gap exist in the ELL subgroup. The table however also shows students with disability 16% proficiency.

The applicant provides very few details in the narrative regarding graduation rates and college enrollment. The narrative provides statistical data from the years 2006, 2007 and 2009; this competition relies on data from the last four years therefore anything prior is outdated and cannot provide support for this plan of reform and its outcomes.

The table provided for graduation rates shows an increase of between 1 to 2 percentage points; the goal appears to be very low. Likewise college enrollment table shows the same trend also appears very low.

In the narrative well as the applicant states it will service Pre-K to 3.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides graphs of data however the data provided shows only a the 2012 data and a calculation done by the applicant of the percentage point increase. The data trends are therefore not evident or clear in determining if the increases occurred over the years or during one year. Furthermore, the applicant refers to school year 2006 in the narrative; it is unclear if this reference was intended to provide support of success however the charts included do not contain any data from that school year.</p> <p>The applicant refers to college enrollment increase between the 2006 and 2009 school year however 2009 to present is not addressed. Figure B9 shows the trend from 2006 to 2009; no other years are listed. The narrative however provides a brief description of a transformed program in 2010 for students on a college track. There is no direct correlation between these pieces of data; it is confusing.</p> <p>The applicant mentions how 3 low-achieving schools increased percentage points however the increase of points appears to be lumped together therefore the success of each individual school can not be determined. It is unclear if all 3 schools had increase in percentage points.</p> <p>The applicant describes the restructuring of one performing schools that occurred in 2006-2007. The applicant later states that the specific school in 2008 met NCLB and continued the trend in 2009. The criteria for this competition requests a record of the past four years; the school described in the narrative would then not be considered low-achieving; it is confusing why 2006-2007 was described in the narrative without any further explanation.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant mentions availability of the expenditures on two sources: the district's public website and Fresno Bee; URL was not provided.</p> <p>The applicant states the information is available for download as a PDF file and contains all required fields.</p> <p>The applicant states that non-expenditures are found on the Board of Education website; URL was not provided.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes the initiatives of the state in great detail such as Kindergarten Readiness Act, RTT Early Learning Challenge, Comprehensive Early Learning Plan, and Transitional Kindergarten. The applicant also mentions implementing Common Core State Standards, Blended Learning Models and STEM. The applicant provides sufficient information in the narrative to support successful conditions as demonstrated in the above mentioned initiatives and sufficient autonomy.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant mentions their collaboration with the Fresno Teachers Association; meetings conducted 2 to 3 times per week as well as the formation of two Task Forces. The task force members are representative of the various stakeholders. The applicant mentions meeting for 65 hours of discussion. The purpose of the task forces and the extensive amount of time dedicated to ensure goals are met appears to be sufficient evidence that stakeholders are engaged and support the proposal throughout the term of the grant.</p> <p>The applicant provides multiple letters of support from various stakeholders in the appendix with the exception of parent and parent organizations and student organizations. These letters were not included in the appendix.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant mentions 35% of third grade students are proficient and 10% of ELL in reading however no gaps are addressed.</p> <p>The current status of implementing a personalized learning environment is not evident in the narrative. Although the reform proposal consisting of rotations, blended learning are mentioned and referenced in a graph, there is not sufficient evidence in the narrative to demonstrate a high-quality plan.</p> <p>The plan is based on one sole need of early literacy and does not address other content that will lead to college and career readiness such as mathematics and science.</p>		

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	10
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides lengthy and repetitive description of the building blocks and strategies for their plan. The proposal has a recurring focus on language and literacy proficiency in grades Pre-K to 3 however it does not address student learning into upper elementary, middle school or high school. While the applicant does provide research in both the appendix and footnotes to evidence kindergarten readiness and its correlation to third grade proficiency, a clear correlation is not provided between third grade and college/career readiness. Graduation rates are not mentioned.</p> <p>The plan utilizes the phrasing college and career readiness however provides no concrete examples or support to evidence the reforms approach and the impact it will have.</p> <p>The applicant mentions building positive relationships, motivating students and creating a nice environment for learning however these do not sustain a measurable approach to determine personalized learning and college/career readiness.</p> <p>The variety of instructional approaches was limited to only three: rotation model, small group projects and digital content; represents a low number of approaches.</p> <p>The daily updates of data are mentioned however the narrative does not specifically detail how this feedback will be utilized or how the feedback determines progress towards college, career or graduation.</p> <p>The applicant refers to interacting with classmates as access to cultures; this appears to be a naturally occurring practice based on the demographics of the school and thus does not demonstrate a high-quality approach.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	18
(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's plan for professional development includes baseline course, formation of committee and on-going Professional development to support student learning.</p> <p>The applicant has a plan for a systematic collection of data daily to drive student instruction and learning.</p>		

The applicants plan for summative and formative teacher evaluation demonstrates an ability to improve teachers practice and effectiveness. Additionally, the applicant plan proposes informal methods to evaluate which would serve purposeful in improving instruction.

The applicant plan for principal evaluation, FUSME, appears to measure several variables this will allow the applicant to make improvements towards their goal. The plan also allows for various opportunities for evaluation which aligns with continuous improvement.

The applicant mentions ATLAS throughout the application and provided support in the appendix. ATLAS appears to be a user friendly data base that will collect pertinent and necessary data to enable the applicant align instruction on a student by student case. This data base also appears to have impact on the evaluation tools for teachers and principals thus providing a checks and balance system.

Although the applicant refers to college and career readiness a detailed description of the strategies, approaches or methods is not available.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments: The organization of the central office is clear both in the narrative and the flowchart provided. The narrative provides a description of the participants and their role in each tier of the flowchart. It appears that various key professionals are represented throughout the organizational flowchart. The applicant does not demonstrate flexibility and autonomy over any factors; the factors are not described in the narrative. Furthermore, the narrative details the formation of a 3-5 year vision that will support the current Regional Approach, Teaching Pyramid and the overarching EXCEL framework; these appear to be non-negotiable and thus not flexible or autonomous. The applicant refers to RTI, a national trend in addressing special needs however no other learning resources or instructional practices are described for students with disabilities and English learners.		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments: The applicant ensures access to necessary content at school by providing tablets for all students however it does not specify if parents will have access at the school as well. The applicant mentions public libraries and community centers will provide access to all. To ensure appropriate levels of support, the applicant will increase quantity of support staff available at the schools in addition to District and school level support staff. Online support will be provided by the vendor. School Literacy and Professional Learning Council that were mentioned in the infrastructure will also provide support. This appears to be sufficient and varying methods of support for all stakeholders. The applicant describes several systems for data collection. There is supporting evidence of the user-friendliness of one system in the appendix. The other systems mentioned such as My Data Button are not detailed therefore the function and appropriateness cannot be determined.		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	7
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant provides a thoughtful plan as described in both the narrative and tables. The applicant describes utilizing a continuous improvement model with regular intervals on the following basis: daily, monthly, quarterly and annually. The applicant mentions utilizing a data dash board and surveys to collect information however it is unclear the nature of the information collected, how it will be utilized and unit or tool of measurement to be used. This remains unclear in the table provided as part of the appendix as well.

Although, table E2 mentions monthly town hall meeting or webcast it is not clear if this forum is to publicly share information. All other sections on table E2 show school based participants no public participants however the chart provided in the appendix shows the town hall meetings are for participating educators.

It is unclear in table E3 if the monthly forums that are listed only in year two for stakeholder engagement is the only opportunity for publicly sharing information. It is confusing as the table found in the appendix shows otherwise.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides information in the narrative piece and on Table E5 within the application which appears to be a school climate survey however such surveys are conducted annually and therefore it is difficult to determine if this strategy is reliable method for ongoing communication and engagement with stakeholders. However, the applicant does however provide a detailed Continuous Improvement Table in Appendix 5. While the criterion E2 seems to have been inadvertently omitted on the printed table, the applicant demonstrates a high quality plan for ongoing communication and engagement. The applicant intends to be able to communicate with the various stakeholders in a number of ways that include surveys, newsletters, monthly meetings, presentations, social media, annual reviews, etc. These avenues of communication appear to be accessible to all stakeholders without any barriers thus enabling the applicant to support its plan for ongoing and continuous communication throughout the period of the grant.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant did not include performance measures for subgroups; only all participating students were provided.</p> <p>There are only 10 performance measures instead of 12 to 14.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant supports its plan to evaluate effectiveness by creating an Oversight Team with leaders of various capacities performing annual reviews.</p>		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The tables imply that that all funds to support the project will be from this competition.</p> <p>There are some items in the budget table which appear to not be itemized such as the number of tables and the number of SMART boards; it is unclear if the amount requested is reasonable.</p> <p>The applicant uses verbiage such as we estimate and we assume throughout portions of the budget table; it is unclear if the estimates or assumptions are low figures or high figures therefore the amounts requested are reasonable and sufficient cannot be determined.</p> <p>One-time costs and on-going costs are evident throughout the table.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant plans for the dissolution of various positions after the term of the grant. The applicant provides rationale that the elimination of these positions will decrease on-going costs. The applicant intends for some of the responsibilities to be transferred to permanent staff.</p> <p>The applicant provides a table to demonstrate the initial costs and a trend of decreasing costs during and after the grant. The rationale provided by the applicant includes seeking corporate grants and sponsorships, state funds, donations, repurposing of equipment, Title II funds; other than Title II, no other specific federal or state funding sources were mentioned.</p> <p>The applicant does mention partnerships with private foundations which are listed in the narrative as well as First 5 Fresno County.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant details a strong partnership with First 5 Fresno County. The partnership appears to be already established. While background information was provided about First 5 Fresno County, some criteria were not clear or addressed.</p> <p>The applicant indicates Persimmony will track selected indicators however it is unclear how the data from this system aligns or interfaces with the system utilized by the applicant. It is unclear how the data will be used to target its resources to improve results for participating students.</p> <p>The applicant mentions an expansion on existing work to scale the model but it is not specific; the strategy is not evident.</p> <p>The applicant describes access to Kinder Camp programs for students who have not previously attended preschool to participate however it is not clear if these students were included in the number of participating students as defined in the notice.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant systematically refers to its model called EXCEL. The model provides various methods of instruction to meet individual needs of the students. The applicant provides research basis both in the footnotes and appendix to support its plan.</p>		

Total	210	139
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## Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	13
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant proposes an optional budget for Teacher Capacity Launchpad. This appears to be an innovative technology driven tool to help the teachers implement the CCSS. The narrative explains the resources available through Launchpad include specific changes to standards and performance assessments with future plans to develop and add strategies and</p>		

resources for instruction thus enabling personalized learning; the applicant to implement its plan and goals. The applicants plan has high demands for technology; this program will integrate well with the other approaches utilizing technology.

The amount requested is over budget limit.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

15

14

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes an optional budget for CORE District Collaboration Plan. The narrative explains that several districts applied for this competition to work in conjunction with each other towards strengthening instruction throughout. This plan as it is proposed appears to have goals that would increase student achievement at a larger scale.



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0919CA-3 for Fresno Unified School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district has described a clear vision of reform that addresses students' needs in preschool through grade 3 and has outlined specific areas of concerns with Kindergarten readiness, grade 3 proficiency, and college and career readiness. While this reform vision has focused on language development skills and personalized learning, the critical success factors can be stated in a single comprehensive vision statement that all students will be proficient by third grade. Furthermore, the district describes the use of data to drive instruction and instructional changes, how instruction will be aligned to rigorous standards as students learn skills necessary for college and careers, and how students will deepen their understanding of new material through blended learning environments. The one area that is not clearly addressed in this section of the proposal is how this will be accomplished while keeping the academic interests of the students infused in the reform. While the reader recognizes that most of the students targeted in this section of the proposal are early childhood, Pre-K and Kindergarten, and students enrolled in grades 1 through 3, the lack of a clear explanation of how the reform vision will infuse the students' own academic interests.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district clearly identified the schools that will be participating. These schools range from two early learning centers that provide only Pre-K and Kindergarten services, 51 elementary schools that provide Pre-K through Grade 3 services, and 17 additional elementary schools who do not offer Pre-K services. The district has decided to approach the reform proposal through a systemic approach to change. Since all elementary schools will participate, the district will be able to implement changes and provide the professional learning, materials, and technology support on a large scale and have the infrastructure in place to support the district-wide change through the professional learning communities in existence. The district also provided evidence of successful implementation of previous change initiatives using a systemic approach such as the math curriculum revision for grades K-6 and updating the technology infrastructure.</p> <p>Furthermore, the district provided solid evidence of the number of students who would be affected by the proposal to meet the application criteria.</p>		

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided details of how the reform proposal could be scaled up by implementing the classroom rotation model in the next grade level band as students move up each year, applying the lessons learned to other grade level bands, and to use the model to improve instruction in other subject areas and grade levels throughout the district.</p> <p>The proposal should meet its goals from the evidence provided that demonstrated a continuous improvement model is actively used to improve instruction and learning. The district has identified critical success factors, established annual learning goals, and determined the milestones that must be achieved in order to deliver on their proposal. The district has done a good job of operationally defining many of the items necessary for successfully implementing the proposal. Finally, the district has an instructional system that utilizes data driven decision making and has experienced past success in improving student learning in mathematics for grades K through 6. The successful implementation of the changes in mathematics resulted in a measurable increase in student performance which the district believes can be replicated with this proposal.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the district clearly identified performance on standardized assessments and clearly explained that baseline data would be recalibrated with the implementation of a new state assessment in the 2014-2015 academic year, the anticipated percentage of increase in was conservative. The district identified achievable goals; however, these goals could have been more ambitious. In early elementary grades, where great achievement gains can be easily obtained, the reader expected to find improvement gains to be 10% or greater. The gains anticipated by the district ranged from 7% increases to 9% increases which were identified as gains for Asian, Black, ED, and Hispanic students; and, ELL students respectively. Recognizing the fact that baseline data will change in 2014, a subgroup currently demonstrating proficiency at 26% (black students) or 10% (ELL students) must make significantly greater gains than the other subgroups. While these gains may be achievable, they are conservatively ambitious. The proposal provides details regarding their small group classroom rotation, ability to customize content and instruction, and the use of digital assessments and detailed information that suggest more ambitious learning gains are possible.</p> <p>As this proposal is focused on Pre-K through Grade 3, the district minimally addressed college enrollment and graduation rates. The proposal would take nine years of implementation to affect these two indicators. The data provided showed a 1% or 2% increase in both enrollment and graduation rates. While this is considered to be extremely conservative increases, this information did not negatively affect the proposal. The weakness in the proposal was detailed above and due to the lack of an ambitious goal of increasing student performance by 10% or greater in the weakest subgroups.</p>		

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	6
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a clear narrative that demonstrated an ability to continuously improve student learning but was not able to significantly close the achievement gaps. The charts that accompanied the narrative only shared data for academic years 2008 and 2012. Many of the charts provided 2012 data and a percentage of change from 2008 to 2012. The narrative could have been better supported by charts that provided data for each year beginning in 2008 and ending in 2012. Another concern was the lack of an explanation of a decline in achievement in mathematics shown in Grade 8. These students declined by 3% from 2012 as compared to 2008 but this was not addressed in the narrative. While the focus of the proposal is on Pre-K through Grade 3 Literacy, the ability to show a clear record of success was brought into question by this decline and should have been addressed. Furthermore, the district was unable to show a clear record of success in closing the achievement gaps. The data provided was an inconclusive chart that supported the narrative of the district having difficulty closing achievement gaps. The district could have improved the narrative by providing the findings of a continuous improvement model's root cause analysis into the reasons the gaps are not closing.</p>		



The district provided a narrative describing the process of turning around persistently low performing schools by increasing learning time for students, increasing learning time for teachers, and creating structures to provide a multi-tiered system of support. The narrative provided little details of the structures that were implemented. Additionally, the multi-tiered system of support is not an ambitious reform because it meets Federal requirements and should have been in place since 2006 with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Furthermore, the district provided details of reform at one low performing elementary school where the principal was replaced. While this may have been a difficult decision, it does not represent an ambitious and significant reform to replace an ineffective leader with one who has a vision and the determination to reach it. Finally, another reform effort described by the district was the reform effort demonstrated in closing a low performing elementary school and reopening it two and half years later as a charter school. While it was a difficult decision to close the school, the application did not provide convincing evidence that the district was directly involved in reopening the school as a charter.

The district provided a narrative describing how student performance data was available to students, teachers, and parents. The information provided details of the district's dashboard of indicators that align to student success and how this information is shared with teachers and parents through regular board meetings and to the public. Additionally, annual progress reports are shared with parents, teachers, and the community. The district did not address how this information is shared with students. The district also did not operationally define regular communication with the school board or public.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The district provided evidence of all personnel salaries, ranging from instructional staff to support staff, are available at any time on the district website and an online database. School level non-personnel expenses are not currently available; however the district is investigating how this might be accomplished in the near future.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The district provided convincing evidence of conditions and autonomy necessary to implement the proposal. The passage of the Kindergarten Readiness Act demonstrated an emphasis on early childhood education, which this proposal intends to use as a springboard for Grade 3 proficiency. Further support can be found in Senate Bill 1200 and Assembly Bill 1246 which allow districts flexibility to choose instructional material that are aligned with Common Core State Standards. Senate Resolution 36, passed in 2004, has operationally defined blended learning, which is a major component of this proposal. Finally, there is precedent of implementing blended learning instruction in public schools around the state. These items substantiate the claim the district has made for the ability and authority to implement the proposal.

The conditions found in the district also support the ability to implement the proposal. The state has begun to implement a uniform evaluation system, which was established for administrators in 2012, has updated teaching standards to include many which match the application requirements such as supporting all student learning, improving instructional practices, and using assessments to provide data driven decisions regarding instruction.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	9
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district stated district leadership and the Teachers' Union leadership met for 65 hours to develop this proposal and collaborated in many ways, including the development of the blended learning classroom rotation model that is a key component of the proposal. The application also documents many letters of support from local early learning centers, youth centers, government leaders, community associations, and institutions of higher learning. The district also based much of its proposal on the findings of other district Task Forces which included a number of parents and students.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

While the district provided a detailed analysis of the needs assessment, it was missing some of the components necessary in

a plan to engage in future needs assessments. The results found Grade 3 proficiency is currently 35% for all students and 10% for English Language Learners. The district also developed the proposal based on the findings and recommendations from two district Task forces which both concluded independently that proficiency in Grade 3 is a non-negotiable to future academic success. The district plan provided specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals; a feasible timeline that was not too cautious or too bold; specific deliverables, and who would be accountable for those deliverables; however, the district did not provide any operational definitions in the narrative about how the plan to continuously improve the model would be utilized.

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching as described in the proposal. This plan included specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals, a feasible timeline that was not too cautious or too bold, specific deliverables, and who would be accountable for those deliverables. The plan specifically identifies the utilization of inquiry-based instruction in classrooms that are nurturing and where high expectations are communicated to every student, including those with high needs. Additionally, the district was able to provide evidence that the needs of young students were taken into consideration due to the various ways the district will utilize goal setting strategies, language development practices, and the inquiry-based instructional practices. The district also identified ways to support the parents and caregivers of the young students who are the focus of this proposal. Finally, the district described a mechanism that would be in place prior to the start of the academic year that would support the students and their parents or caregivers to use the tools available to them through this proposal.</p> <p>The weakness in the plan was the lack of operationally defining teacher/student relationships as it is used to improve student performance as well as clearly addressing how the proposal would address college and career-readiness. While the focus of the proposal was on serving students in K through Grade 3, the proposal could have been strengthened by operationally defining the expectations of how the impact on Grade 3 students would transfer to college and career-readiness.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a high quality plan for improving teaching and leading as described in the proposal narrative. This plan included specific goals and activities, a realistic timeline that was neither cautious nor bold, specific deliverables such as the utilization of the Accountable Community structure to engage in continuous improvement and growth, and who would be accountable for those deliverables. The plan also identifies the utilization of instructional coaches to provide the necessary follow up to professional learning opportunities.</p> <p>One weakness of the district's plan was found in measuring student performance. While the use of the data would be effective to inform instructional decisions, the use of summative computer based assessment daily may be an excessive amount of testing for K through Grade 3 students.</p>		

### D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	14
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a high quality plan support the implementation at the district level as district leaders provide the support and resources needed by every student, teacher, and school as described in the proposal narrative. This plan included</p>		

specific goals and activities; a realistic timeline that would put missing support structures in place prior to implementation; specific deliverables such as the utilization of School Literacy and Professional Learning Councils, Regional support teams, and an oversight team; structures to engage in continuous improvement and growth through Accountable Communities; and, who would be accountable for those deliverables. The School Literacy and Professional Learning Councils would have the ability to make decisions at the school level regarding daily school operations.

Due to the nature of young students, the district's proposal includes mechanisms to provide students opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills in order to allow more time to focus on skills that are weaker. The students will be able to demonstrate their mastery in multiple methods that will be developed through the blended learning model and in alignment with Common Core State Standards.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided a high quality plan to support the implementation utilizing district infrastructure as the district provides the support and resources needed by every student, teacher, and school as described in the proposal narrative. This plan included specific goals and activities; a realistic timeline; specific deliverables such as the utilization of existing technology in the public library system; and, who would be accountable for those deliverables.</p> <p>One weakness of the district's plan was found in the reliance on a parent portal to provide access to the instructional content and resources. While the use of the public library system to provide the technology access, it may be difficult for all parents and other stakeholders to effectively utilize technology when living in one of the nation's highest concentrations of extremely poor neighborhoods where four out of every five students are living in poverty.</p>		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided evidence of a strong continuous improvement process that is already in place. This process has been successfully used in California's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant and with other community partnerships. The process described in the proposal has five steps in an ongoing cycle of planning or setting goals, implementation, assess the implementation, conduct an analysis of the implementation, and reflect and adjust implementation. Additionally, the district provided operationally defined details about the frequency of improvement opportunities. The information provided focused on sharing the results of the continuous improvement process with district leaders, school based leadership teams, and educators but intends to rely on monthly newsletters on the district's website and updates through the community newspaper, School Board meetings, PTA meetings, and through digital means. There was no information in the narrative about how to provide regular communication with parents who may not have access to the methods described above.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district referenced a plan that clearly identified strategies to promote ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. The district supported this plan by stating all stakeholders would be provided information through monthly newsletters on the district website, local news media, monthly school board meetings, and other digital media outlets such as the parent portal.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The district provided evidence of meeting the requirements of this section. The proposal included four Pre-K through Grade 3 student assessments, three of which are social/emotional indicators. The other assessments are indicators of performance for teachers, administrators, and parents. The district also provided reasonable rationale for including the assessments that lead</p>		

to an analysis of social and emotional development as well as details about how the measure would be reviewed and improved over the duration of the grant.

The weakness of the proposal was a lack of addressing subgroup performance and a low number of student assessments to measure academic performance since three of the four student assessments were focused on social/emotional indicators.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district described a plan to review the effectiveness of the proposal annually by soliciting implementation feedback from teachers, coaches, and instructional leaders; and, by tracking changes in instruction and student performance. However, the frequency of the review does not allow for timely modifications to the implementation. A review process that would be able to impact implementation and support structures that would improve implementation should be done quarterly at a minimum.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The district clearly identified the funds that will be used to support the project, ranging from additional personnel to ensure the grant is fully implemented and self sustaining after the grant period to the equipment necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the project. The district also provided a strong rationale for the expenses as they relate to the success of the proposal. Overall, the budget appears to be reasonable and will provide the support necessary for the proposal to be successfully implemented. The weakness in the budget was the limited narrative that was found within the tables.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: The district anticipates being able to sustain the proposal's goals after the grant through the adoption of the blended learning experience as standard operating procedures in Pre-K through Grade 3 and beyond as the students move up in grade levels. Furthermore, some of the significant costs involved with the oversight team and the School Literacy and Professional Learning Councils will be eliminated with the dissolution of these teams. The district stated it will transfer the responsibilities of these teams to existing structures. Furthermore, the district stated it intends on aggressively seeking other revenue sources and financial contributions through other grants, local partnerships, and donations.  One identified weakness is the reliance on education funding legislation to be passed by voters in the November election. If the legislation is not passed, ongoing costs would be difficult for the district fund.		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The district's strengths in this proposal were found in the narrative description of the blended learning classroom rotation model which focused on providing young students opportunities to engage in inquiry-based learning as well as the ability to demonstrate mastery of rigorous standards as the district strived to ensure all students were proficient readers by Grade 3. Another strength of this proposal can be found in the professional learning of the educators in the district. The district has a good understanding of the continuous improvement process and has utilized it to fully identify areas of concern, the root causes of those concerns, and has developed a highly specific, operationally defined plan to address those concerns. Furthermore, the district did not identify more than 10 desired results, keeping within the requirements of the Competitive		

Preference Priority. Finally, the continuation of this proposal should be possible based on the provided narrative.

The district's weakness in this proposal was in the ineffective evidence of sustaining learning gains from 2008 through 2012, the inability for the district to close achievement gaps and the lack of information regarding why this was unobtainable, and the identification of ambitious yet achievable performance goals. In the areas of the weakest performance, student improvement gains would have been expected to be 10% or greater yet they were not. A specific example of this was found in the percentage of grade 3 English Learner students increasing from a baseline score of 10% to 13% the next year to 21% the following year and then maintaining a 9% increase each year. Another example was found in the percentage of grade 3 Economically Disadvantaged students increasing from a baseline score of 31% to 34% the next year and then maintaining a 7% increase each year. A more ambitious approach to improving student achievement may be to establish a minimum of 10% increases in student performance and in areas of such extremely low baseline data, a 15% increase may still be achievable through the changes in instruction envisioned by the proposal.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Overall, the district met the requirements. There was ample evidence of improvements in instruction, leadership capacity, and student learning through a variety of methods ranging from the integration of technology to develop blended learning classroom rotations in order for students to meet proficiency standards in grade 3 as the students are required to have complete literacy development skills in order to be successful throughout the students' academic careers, The weaknesses found in the establishment of ambitious and attainable growth did not significantly detract from the district's ability to meet the Absolute Priority 1.</p>		

Total	210	174
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## Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	3
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Optional Budget Supplement #1:</p> <p>The district provided a detailed description of a clear, discretely separate program that seeks to provide additional support to multi-district support as teachers implement Common Core State Standards utilizing best practices in instruction. The rationale was appropriate to the proposal by providing needed support to encourage further collaboration among teachers and districts who are already participating in the collaborative effort.</p> <p>The first major flaw in the first optional budget supplement project was the budget exceeded \$2 million limit. Upon further review, the district plan provided specific goals and activities to accomplish the goals of accelerating teachers' implementation of Common Core State Standards; however a detailed timeline was not provided other than annual targets. Additionally, specific deliverables were not clearly identified for the various positions that would be funded, and who would be accountable for those deliverables was also not provided.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11
Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:		

Optional Budget Supplement #2:

The district provided a detailed description of a clear, discretely separate program that seeks to provide additional support to multi-district support structures and systems for teacher collaboration as they strive to master the implementation of personalized learning plans and address current challenges in student achievement. The rationale was appropriate to the proposal by providing additional support to encourage further collaboration among teachers and districts that are already participating in the collaborative effort by improving professional development, and encouraging case studies by teachers to be published and shared with the collaborative groups.

The weakness in the second optional budget supplement project was presence of a high quality plan. The district plan provided specific goals and a rationale behind the stated goals to improve the implementation of personalized learning plans and to identify high quality instructional practices; however a detailed timeline was not provided, specific deliverables were not clearly identified for the various positions that would be funded through this project; and, who would be accountable for those deliverables was also not provided.